

A
LAMENTATION
OVER
ENGLAND
AND

Faithful Warning

To the Inhabitants thereof.

By William Bingley.

Amos 8. 10. *And I will turn your Feasts into Mourning, and all your Songs into Lamentation; I will bring up Sackcloth upon all Loyns, and Baldness upon every Head, and I will make it as the Mourning of an only Son, and the end thereof as a bitter Day.*

Jer. 6. 10. *To whom shall I speak and give Warning, that they may hear? Behold their Ear is Uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken; behold the Word of the Lord is unto them a Reproach, they have no delight in it, &c.*

L O N D O N,
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First, **A** *Lamentation over England, and the Dominions thereunto belonging, with a faithful Warning to the Inhabitants thereof, to cease from the evil of their Doings, and to turn unto the Lord by speedy Repentance, that so they may escape the dreadful Judgments of Almighty God, which are threatned and ready to be executed upon them, because of the Crying Sins that do abound in Nations.*

Secondly, *A Warning to the Rulers and Magistrates (in particular) to leave off persecuting and afflicting the Innocent; and to amend their Lives and Conversations, and set up Justice and execute true Judgment among the People, lest God plead with them in his Anger, and consume them in his sore Displeasure.*

Thirdly, *An Expostulation with the Clergy of the aforesaid Dominions whereby they are discovered not to be in the Steps, Lives and Practices of the Prophets of God, true Ministers of Christ, but of the false Prophets, and of Antichrist.*

Fourthly, *A Warning to those among them, whose day of Mercy is now over, to repent of these their Wicked and Antichristian Practices whereby they deceive the People, or else the Lord will make them Hissing and a Reproach to the Nations, and their Memorial a Scorn to Generations to come, &c.*



A Lamentation over England, and the Dominions thereunto belonging.

O H England! England! the Land of my Nativity, for whom my Soul hath often mourned, and at this time mourns before the Lord, and my Spirit is grieved within me, to behold so much *Wickedness, Ungodliness, Oppression and Abomination*, as at this day abounds in thee! A Nation, to whom God Almighty hath signally appeared, and been at work in, by his mighty Arm and divine Power; and the proffers of Love and Mercy from the God of Mercies have been to thee, and the Lord hath long waited to be gracious and merciful to thee, and hath extended one Visitation after another unto thee, and hath many a time sought thy Inhabitants in tender yearning Bowels of Love.

But notwithstanding all these Mercies, and tender Dealings of the Lord with you the Inhabitants of *England*; how have you continued in your Sins and Transgressions against the Lord, that hath thus sought your return to him, that he might have mercy on you! And when intreatings and yearning Bowels would not draw nor prevail upon you (to restrain you from your evil courses, and to bring you to amendment of Life) he hath threatened Judgment, and also many times executed it upon thy Inhabitants, O *England!* and hath shewed his displeasure against you many a time; but neither Mercy nor Judgment, Smiles nor Threats, have taken place among many of thy Rebellious and Gain-saying Inhabitants. For though the Lord hath often intreated, and his Arm of everlasting Mercies have been stretched out to you, as it was to *Israel* of old; and as they rebelled against the Lord, who would have gathered them, even so have you refused to hearken to him, and to *For sake the evil of your ways*, and to turn to the Lord God, who would have saved you from the Wrath and fierce Vengeance that is coming upon the Rebellious.

And though he hath pleaded with you in Judgment, and hath manifested his Displeasure and Wrath in the midst of thy Inhabitants (though always mixed with Mercy) and shewed them that he can do whatsoever he will; for who can withstand him in his great Power? Seeing the Nations are but as the drop of a Bucket before him, and as the small Dust in the Ballance; for he hath over-turned on one hand, and overturned on the other hand, in the sight of many of you who are yet alive; and hath brought down the mighty from their Seats (who exalted themselves against the Lord, and a-

gainst the Innocent) and hath exalted them of low degree , and when they did not answer the end , for which the Lord God appeared on their behalf , but rebelled against the living God , who had scattered their Enemies before them ; the Hand of the Lord also turned against them , and confounded them , and broke and scattered them , and hath blown them away with the Breath of his Mouth , as the Chaff of the Summer-threshing-floor

And yet all these *Revolutions and Overturnings* , which the Lord hath brought to pass in the sight of many of you the Inhabitants of England , and his pleadings with you in Judgment , time after time with *Sword* with *Pestilence and Fire* , and many other dreadful Judgments , which have been both threatned and executed in a dreadful manner ; yet have not many of thy Inhabitants bowed themselves to the Lord , who hath thus appeared ; nor feared before this dreadful God , *who will be revealed in Flames of Fire , taking Vengeance on the Rebellious and Gain-sayers of the Gospel of his Son* ; but have grieved and provoked him by your *Wickedness and Ungodliness* from day to day.

And when the Lord hath sent his *Servants and Messengers* to you , who have faithfully *reproved Sin in the Gate* , and where-ever it appeared ; and have cryed unto you , *To break off from your Sins and Transgressions , by true Repentance and godly sorrow , for your Sins , and to amend your Lives and Conversations , and to turn to God with all your Hearts , and to put away the evil of your doings from before the Eyes of the Lord , and to cease to do evil and learn to do well ; that so the Lord (according to his promise) might have blotted out your Sins , and remembered your Transgressions no more , that Rest and Peace with the everlasting God might have been known to your immortal Souls for ever and ever .*

But all these labours of Love , and yearning Bowels , with which you have been sought , both by the Lord , and also by his Servants (who have since early , and travelled with their Lives in their Hands , and have earnestly desired your turning to the Lord) have been slighted and set at nought by you : Neither have you turned from the evil of your wayes at all , but like *Jerusalem* of old (whom the Lord would have gathered) have rejected the Reproofs of the Spirit and Grace of God in your selves , and are doing despite to the Spirit of Grace , by which you should have been both sanctified and also sealed to the day of Redemption ? and also rejecting the Instructions , Reproofs and Warnings , which by the faithful Servants of the Lord have been sounded in your Ears : Instead of hearkening thereunto , you have evilly intreated them with *Whipping , Stocking , Stoning , Spoiling of their Goods* , to the ruining of many Families , ; imprisoning some to Death , and Banishing others ; with many other gross and horrid Abuses ; wherewith you have entreated the Servants of the Lord , for no other cause than for the
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exercise of their Consciences towards God, and reproving you for your Sins, and crying to you for amendment of Life; which bespeaks you to be a People that hate Righteousness, and love Iniquity, chusing your own Vanities, and slighting the tender Mercies of the Lord God, treasuring up to your selves Wrath against the day of Wrath; and so are bringing swift Destruction and Misery upon your selves. Oh! My Soul mourns in the sight and sense of that *dreadful day* which is coming upon you, for your Transgressions and Rebellion against the living God, and for your thus abusing and shamefully entreating them, who have been sent unto you by the Lord, who sought nothing but the good and everlasting peace of your immortal Souls

But none of these things have prevailed upon many of thy Inhabitants, O *England*! To soften your hard Hearts, and to tender them before the Lord. For instead of ceasing from your Sins and Abominations (which abound amongst many of you) by true Repentance, and amendment of your Lives and Conversations, and turning to the Lord, who hath cried to you many a time, saying, *Turn you, turn you, why will you dye?* (as he did to *Israel* of old) but you have stopped your Ears as they did, who were compared to the *deaf Adder that would not hear the Voice of the Charmér, charming never so wisely*; and so continuing still in your Abominations (which the Lord would have gathered you from, had you obey'd his Voice) manifold Sins and Wickedness encrease amongst you, a *Swearing, Cursing, Damning, Revelling, Drunkenness, Whoredoms and Murders*; with many other gross and shameful Impieties; yea, almost all manner of Wickedness, Rebellion and Treachery, both against God and Man, abounds amongst many of you the Inhabitants of *England*, for which God will bring Judgment and Sorrow upon you, yea, such Sorrow as shall never have an end, except you speedily repent.

And those that can act these horrid Wickednesses and crying Sins (which indeed make the Land mourn) without fear or shame, as if they did not consider that there is a God, who will punish for them; are they not most esteemed and set up amongst many of you now a days? and so hat is seen to increase amongst many of you the Inhabitants of *England* (to the grief and sorrow of the hearts of many) which the Prophet saw, and concerning which he cried out of old, saying, *The Proud are counted happy; yea, they that work Wickedness, are even set up, and they that tempt God are even delivered*, Mal. 3. 15.

But let all such know, who are guilty of these Evils, your everlasting Thralldom and eternal Misery is coming on, and will overtake you (if ye speedily repent not) out of which you shall never be delivered.

And such as cannot run with the multitude into those Evils and Abominations which provoke the Lord God of Heaven and Earth to Anger, but live

live in the fear of God, and a Life becoming *Christianity*, as knowing they must give an account (and so must all the Sons and Daughters of Men) to God the Judge of all, both quick and dead, and must receive a Reward at his hand, according to their Doings, whether they be good or evil, and so cannot rush into Iniquity with them, as the Horse rusheth into Battell, are become a Prey to the Ungodly, and as Objects of Scorn and Derision, on who the Wicked and the Ungodly execute their Cruelty and grievous Oppression; yea, Godliness and Piety is so little regarded amongst many who profess *Christianity*, that a sober Life and a Godly Conversation is become a Derision; it's Crime enough now a dayes amongst many, for a Man to have a civil Carriage and a sober Behaviour (and to walk as one who fears the Lord) to be scoffed at and vilified with reproachful Names, as he passeth through Town or City.

So that Wickedness and Debauchery, Looseness and Prophaneness is encouraged and abounds; Virtue and Sobriety are discouraged and decreased among many of you the Inhabitants of *England*. For we see many of you are living and spending your daies here in this World, in those things which are so contrary to Christianity, Purity and Holiness (without which none shall see the Lord) as if there were no such things to be known or minded by you: And all those holy Admonitions in the Scriptures of Truth, and the threatnings of punishment and Eternal Sorrow to the Wicked and Ungodly, which the Scriptures are full of, (if timely Repentance be not known) are slighted and disregarded by you, as if they should never be fulfilled nor executed upon you.

And these are the Practices that have been, and yet are found amongst you, encouraged and upheld by you to this day, against an innocent and harmlesse People, whom God Almighty hath gathered and chosen out of the World, the Waies and Abominations thereof, to be a peculiar People to himself, zealous of good Works, who have alwaies sought the good and peace of the Nation, and the abounding of Justice and Equity therein, and have often entreated the Lord, and supplicated God on your behalf, *That he would not break in upon You, the Inhabitants of England, by his fierce Wrath and sore Displeasure*, lest he should consume you all at once, for your Sins and Transgressions against him, who hath tendered Salvation, but you refused it.

And many have laboured faithfully among you, to turn you from Darkness to the Light of Christ, (which now shines, blessed be the Lord for ever) and from Satan's Power (by which you have been, and yet are captivated) and prevailed upon to work Iniquity with greediness to the Power of God, which would have Redeemed out of that Slavery and Captivity, into the glorious Liberty and Freedom of the Sons of God, had there been Obedience and Subjection yielded to it.

But this also hath been slighted and set at nought by many of you? And those who have thus laboured and travelled among you for your good, you have rewarded with *Stocking, Stoning and Imprisonments*, with many other gross and horrid Abuses, as *Jerusalem* did of Old them that were sent to her: And instead of turning to *Christ, that was the true Light, which lighteth every Man that cometh into the World*, John 1. 19. You have made a scorn and derision of it, and have loved *Darkness rather than the Light*, (which manifests to you the wickedness of your evil Hearts, and the Abominations that have lodged there) *because their Deeds were evil*. John 3. 19, 20. And so have hated the blessed Light that doth reprove for Sin, loving your Sins, for which you have been reprov'd, better than the Light who hath reprov'd you.

And so have manifested your selves to be such as the Apostle spake of, *Lovers of your own Pleasures, Proud, Blasphemers, disobedient to Parents, Unthankful, Unholy, without natural Affection, Truce-breakers, false Accusers, Incontinent, Fierce, Despisers of those that are good, Traitors, Heady, High-minded, Lovers of Pleasure more than Lovers of God, &c.* 2 Tim. 3. 2, 3, 4.

And in these Evils above-mentioned, you are satisfying your own Hearts Lusts, living in all manner of Voluptuousness, Pride, vain Glory, and forgetfulness of God, and so are guilty of those Sins which *Israel* of Old were guilty of, *who sat down* (in forgetfulness of God) *to eat and to drink, and rose up to play*, Exod. 32. 6.

And this is the State of too many of you the Inhabitants of *England*, both Priests and People, for which the Wrath of Almighty God is kindled against you, and his sore Displeasure is nigh to break forth upon you, in which he will trample you under his Feet, and appoint you your Portion in the Lake of Perdition for ever, if you repent not, and that speedily.

Oh *England! England!* How many Warnings have thy Inhabitants had? And how long hath the Lord strove with you? both by his Servants, and also by the many signal Tokens that have appeared of his displeasure amongst you? Yet none of those things have prevailed upon you to turn from the Evil of your waies; but you have hardened your Hearts, and stiffened your Necks in your Wickedness and Rebellion against God, (though he has long waited to be gracious to you) for which God will bring everlasting Misery and Sorrow upon you, if ye continue in these Evils which have abounded, and yet abound among you.

For although the Apostle saith expressly, *Know you not that the Unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be not deceived, neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor Drunkards, nor Revilers, &c. shall inherit the Kingdom of God*, 1 Cor. 6. 9. 10. And notwithstanding these Testimonies which are certainly true, and will be fulfilled upon all the Ungodly: How many are living in these very Evils! as *Whoredoms, Drunkenness, Revilings*, with many o-
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ther crying Sins, which are expressly for bidden ; yet you continued in them, as if all those Judgments and Torments threatned in the Scriptures of Truth against the Wicked, were but meer Fictions. And so you go on in your Wickedness and Ungodliness, as if there were neither Punishment nor Torment to the Wicked, and as if there were neither God nor Devil, Heaven nor Hell,

But let all such know, that the dreadful God of Heaven and Earth, that rained Fire and Brimstone upon *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah* of Old, that punished the Wicked in every Age, (who hath promised, and will perform it) though the Wicked joyn hand in hand, they shall not go unpunished ; but he will render the Recompence and Reward of your own doings into your Bosoms, and if you do not turn to him while he strives with you, ye shall feel the weight of his avenging Hand and Iron-Rod, with which he will dash the Rebellious Nations to pieces like a Potter's Vessel. And now my Soul desires that you may turn from your evil Courses, and no longer continue in your exaltedness of mind and heart, and in your Wickedness and Ungodliness, lest you be brought down and turned into Hell, with all Nations that forget God, *Psal. 9. 17.* to be tormented with the Devil and his Angels for ever and evermore

For the Lord often waited to be gracious unto you, and hath born with you, though you have greatly provoked him, yet his patience has lasted long ; and he hath held forth a hand of love to many, who have taken no notice of it : But now his patience is almost worn out, and his long suffering well nigh come to an end ; yea, I am afraid it's come to an end already to many of you, the Inhabitants of *England*, and his Indignation is kindled, and burns hot against you, who have refused to hearken to him, who hath called you time after time, and is nigh to break forth like a devouring Fire, and before him the Wicked shall be as Hay, and as Stubble, whom God will consume, and will leave them neither Root nor Branch.

For behold, the Cry of your Iniquities hath reached unto Heaven, and your Sins have come up before the Lord, and into remembrance with our God ; and the Day wherein he will ease him of his Adversaries, and avenge him of his Enemies maketh haste, wherein he will pour out his Wrath, Indignation and Judgment upon you, the Inhabitants of *England* (that continue in your Gain-saying and Rebellion against God) without any mixture of Mercy.

Oh ! you my Native Country-Men and People of *England* (in general) for whom a travail is upon my Spirit at present and hath been many a time, that you might be prevailed upon (whose Day of Mercy is not yet ended and over, whom the shadow of Death and the Night is not yet wholly spread) to consider your latter end before it be too late ; and to turn from your Sins and Transgressions, your Haughtiness, Pride, and vain Glory, and your

your abusing your selves with those things which God hath extended as Mercies unto you, viz. your wasting, abusing and spending the good Creatures of God to satisfie your Lusts, which hath highly displeased the Lord, and provoked him to Anger.

And that you may all come to learn that blessed Lesson, which the holy Men of Old learned, who were taught by the Grace and Spirit of God, (*a measure whereof is given to every man to profit withal*, 1 Cor. 12. 7.) which was, *That denying Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts, they might live Soberly, Righteously and Godly in this present evil World*, Tit. 2. 11, 12. Which all that ever come to inherit Rest and Peace with God, and to have a Habitation in his holy Kingdom of Everlasting Joy, must be found living in, and to cry to God in a sense of your miserable state and deplorable condition, while the Ear of his tender Mercy is open to hear you, lest such a Day come upon and overtook you, as was threatened to a People of Old, *wherein you may cry, and the Lord will not hear you; (because you have not hearkened to him when he called) you may call and he will not answer; but will laugh at your Calamity, and mock when your fear cometh.*

But that this Day may never overtake you, to whom the Visitation of God is yet continued, is the hearty desire and Prayer of my Soul to God for you: Therefore turn to God with all your hearts, while his Arms of tender Mercy are open to receive you; and trifle not away your precious time that yet remains, lest by so doing, you bring the Sentence of an Eternal Exclusion upon your selves from God, and the Joy of his Kingdom forever and ever.

And, Oh that a true Desire were begotten in all your Hearts and Minds, to come to that blessed Fountain of God's free Love, which he hath opened for all who are willing to come to it, the Virtue whereof purgeth the Souls of all that wash in it, from Sin and Uncleaness, and so sprinkles the Conscience from Death, and dead Works, to serve the living God in newness and purity of a holy Life.

And now, Oh that you all may be willing to take that good Counsel, which was given by the Lord to a People of Old, when he said by the Mouth of his Prophet, *Wash you, make you clean, put away from before me the Evil of your Doings; cease to do evil, and learn to do well; seek Judgment, relieve the Oppressed, judg the Fatherless, plead for the Widow: Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your Sins be as Scarlet, they shall be as white as Snow; though they be red as Crimson, they shall be as Wool: If you be willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the Land, &c.* Isa. 1. 16, 17, 18, 19.

These are the precious Promises of God to all who are willing to forsake the evil of their doings, and to turn to him with all their hearts, who desires not the death (or destruction) of any, but rather that they may repent and live.

And again, the good Counsel and Advice of the Holy Apostle ought to be minded and observed by you all, which is on this wise, *Cleanse your Hands ye Sinners, purifie your Hearts ye Double-minded; be afflicted and mourne and Weep; Let your Laughter be turned into Mourning, and your Joy into Heaviness: Humble your selves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up* Jam. 4. 8. 9. 10.

And unless you thus humble your selves under the mighty hand of God, and turn to the Lord, and forsake your sinful Wayes and evil Courtes, and wait to know a being washed in the Blood of Jesus Christ (which cleanseth from all Sin) that is the Fountain of God's free and great Love opened unto all Mankind, you can never come to have a place in the Rest which God hath prepared, nor in that Kingdom of Eternal Glory, which remaineth sure to the Righteous for ever.

Now the Lord knows (who searches the Hearts, and tryeth the Reins of all, from whose all-seeing Eye nothing can be hid) that I labour for, and seek nothing more, than your turning to the Lord with broken, tender and penitent Hearts, that you may find Mercy with God to your immortal Souls; and that while you have dayes here in this World, you may so live in his Fear, Witdom and Counsel, as that whenever your latter end cometh, and Death looks you in the Face, and summons you before the righteous Judge of Heaven and Earth, you may lay down your Heads, and go to your Graves, in Peace with God, and in a full assurance of a Habitation in that Eternal Joy, where no Sorrow nor Sighing shall ever come,

These are the Desires and earnest Breathings of him, whose Soul hath often been wounded, and his Spirit grieved, in the hearing and beholding the Wickedness and Abominations which have abounded, and yet do abound amongst many unto this very day; and also hath mourned, and been lowly before the Lord. in the sight and sense of that dreadful day, which will certainly overtake and come upon all those, who continue in their Wickedness and Rebellion against God

A Warning to the *Rulers* and *Magistrates*, &c.

ANd now all ye *Rulers*, *Magistrates*, and Men in Authority in *England*, and the Dominions thereunto belonging, the Lord God of Heaven and Earth (in whom Power and Authority remains for ever, *To pull down and set up whomsoever he pleaseth*) is highly displeased with many of you, (not exempting the Wicked and Oppressive Rulers through the whole World) because you have not feared before his Eternal Power and Majesty, by whom the Life, Breath and Being of all Mankind, and every living Creature is continued, who can take it away. and bring the highest and lofeliest of mortal Men to the Dust (from whence they came) at his Pleasure.

Neither have you waited to receive Wisdom and Counsel from him, the great Counsellor, to act and to discharge your selves as you ought to have done, in so great Affairs and weighty Concerns as you have undertaken; which if you had done, ye would have encouraged Virtue and Righteousness in all, and punished Vice and Wickedness, where ever it appeared, and have been a Terror to evil Doers, and a Praise to them that were found doing well; and so would have eased the Oppressed, by breaking the bonds of Oppression, and executed Justice and Equity in the Earth, and thereby Truth and Holiness, Purity and Righteousness would have been exalted among you; and this would have brought peace and lasting satisfaction into your own Hearts, and Joy and Tranquility to the Nation in general.

But have not many of you done and acted to the contrary? For instead of punishing Debauchery and Wickedness, viz. *Swearing*, *Cursing*, *Drunkenness*, *Whoredoms*, *Looseness* and *Prophaneness* in others, which you ought to have done, and to have been good Examples of Purity and Holiness in your Lives and Conversations to all) are not many of you yourselves, living and taking delight and pleasure in the above-mentioned Evils, and gross Abominations? for which God, the righteous Judge of Heaven and Earth (who will not be byassed with Rewards) will punish with Everlasting Pain, and Eternal Flames, if there be a continuing in them.

And many of you by your bad Lives and Conversations, (others having taken you for Examples) have you not encouraged them in their Wickedness? Is not that the Cause which maketh Ungodliness abound?

as it doth among many at this day, to the grief and sorrow of many, who have truly desired to see the Current of Iniquity stopt.

And whether have you set up *Judgment* and *Justice* as you ought to have done? Or executed it upon the Transgressors, or eased the Oppressed, or broken the Bonds of Oppression, and have been a *terror to the evil Doers, and Encouragers of them that do well?*

But have not many of you punished and oppressed the Innocent, and have executed your Cruelty upon them, and have let the Transgressors and the Wicked go free? And so are not such found in the Steps of those against whom the Prophet of the Lord cryed out of Old, saying, *Your Hands are defiled with Blood, your Fingers with Iniquity, your Lips have spoken Lies, your Tongues muttred Perverseness; none calleth for Justice, nor any pleadeth for Truth: They trust in Vanity and speak Lies, they conceive Mischief, and bring forth Iniquity; Their Works are Works of Iniquity; The act of Violence is in their hands; Their feet run to do evil; They make haste to shed Innocent Blood; Wasting and Destruction are in their Paths; The way of Peace they know not, and there is no Judgment in their goings; They have made them crooked Paths, whosoever goeth therein shall not know Peace; and Judgment is turned away backward, and Justice standeth a far off; for Truth is fallen in the streets, and Equity cannot enter; yea, Truth falleth, and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a Prey; And the Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no Judgment, Isa. 59: 4, & 6, 7, 8, 14, 15.*

And have not many, or most of these Wickednesses been acted among many of you the Rulers and Magistrates of England, and the Dominion thereunto belonging? And have not many devised Mischief and Oppression against an Innocent People, that have done no wrong nor harm to any of you, nor to the Nation in general; but have sought the good and everlasting Welfare of the Sons and Daughters of Men every where? And have not cruel Laws been made against them? And have they not been (with many other Laws which were never made or intended against us) executed upon us, with cruelty and severity, (though the breach of no just Law can be charged upon us) to the ruine, spoiling and exposing many Families to Poverty, which were capable of relieving and assisting others? And are not these Cruelties and unrighteous Practices upheld and continued? So that at this very day, many undergo great hardships, abuses and cruel usages, for no other cause that can justly be laid to their Charge, than for keeping their Consciences clear in the sight of God for worshiping him according to his holy Requirings, and for reprovings Sin in the Gate, and crying to People, *To leave off their Wickedness, Pride, Drunkenness, Whoredoms, Cursing and Swearing, with many other great Abominations, which abound too much among many, both*

Priests and People; for which God Almighty is angry with this Nation, and will bring his *dreadful Judgments* on all those that continue therein.

And the Cry that hath run through many in this day, to *Rulers, Priests, and People*, hath been, *To break off from the aforementioned Evils by true Repentance, and by Amendment of their Lives and Conversations, while the Day of Mercy lasteth to them, and to fear the living God, that they might serve him in Truth and Righteousness*; and this is that which we have sought or desired (even to see this Change wrought in all) in our Labours and Travails, for which we have this reward of Oppression, Cruelty, Spoiling of Goods and Imprisonments, with many other great inhumane and unchristian-like Abuses, which our innocent Sufferings for many years, and unto this very day (which at this time is very great) may plainly shew; Though alwayes without any just cause given on our parts; for none can justly charge us with *Plotting and Contriving, Rebellion or Insurrections* against the King or the Government or Peace of the Nation. But we have alwayes sought the good and everlasting Happiness of all, yea, of our Enemies themselves, though many times Shamfully abused by them, both in Body and Goods; and the good and welfare of the *Rulers and Magistrates of England*, though many of you have imprisoned many of us (time after time) some in nasty holstill Death, and others to the Ruining of their Families (as to outward things) because they could not wrong nor offer Violence to their own Consciences.

And when Authority hath been given to Wicked, Ungodly, Prophane and Unreasonable men, to make Spoil of their Goods (who were sure to have one part of the Spoil themselves) they have not only made Havock and great Spoil thereof, but have taken Liberty (if they had not Power given them) grossly to abuse their *Bodies* also, by halling and beating them, &c.

And all these *Unrighteous, Unjust Dealings* and *Proceedings* have been patiently born (only a cry hath been in our hearts to the Lord, *That he would open their Understandings, and let them see what they were doing* (that so they might repent and find mercy with God) without seeking Revenge as knowing *Vengeance is the Lords and he will repay*; committing our cause to God, *who will plead the cause of the Innocent*. And that this has been our Practice, it is not unknown to many of you.

So, I desire you *Magistrates* (who have been most concerned in persecuting of us) may consider those Cruelties and Oppressions which have been inflicted upon us; and how there hath been no just Cause on our parts for it: For what *Plots* have we contrived? What *Disturbance* have we made to the Government? Have we not always been an innocent, suffering People? Look back at our Lives and Conversations, ever since we were a People (in scorn) called *Quakers*; and at our Carriage and Behavior towards all

men :

men : And also, take a view of your dealings with us, and what hath been inflicted upon us; and you may see whether we have justly deserved it by any Evil that we have done: I am sure, if some look back with an impartial Eye, they will have cause to be ashamed of their Dealings and Proceedings against us, who have made us as objects, on whom they have executed their Cruelty and Oppression. And also take a view of your doings, and see whether many of you are not found too much in the steps of those of old, whom the Prophet of the Lord cried out against, saying, *Hear I pray you, O Heads of Jacob, and ye Princes of the House of Israel; Is it not for you to know Judgment? who hate the good and love the evil, who pluck off their skins from off them; and their flesh from off their Bones: who also eat the flesh of my People and say their skins from off them, and they break their Bones and chop them in pieces as flesh for the Gallion,* Micah 3. 1, 2, 3.

And the Judgment threatened, which was just upon them for their Wickedness, Cruelty and Oppression, which was inflicted on his People by them without any bowels of mercy, was on this wise; *Then shall they Cry unto the Lord, but he will not hear them, — he will even hide his face from them at that time, as they behaved themselves ill in their doings,* verſe 4. Again, the Prophet saith, *But truly I am full of Power by the Spirit of the Lord, and of Judgment, and of Might, to declare unto Jacob his Transgressions and to Israel his sins. Hear this, I pray you, ye Heads of the house of Jacob, and ye Princes of the House of Israel, that abhor Judgment, and pervert all Equity, that build up Zion with Blood, and Jerusalem with Iniquity; The Heads thereof judge for Reward, and the Priests teach for Hire, &c. yet will they lean upon the Lord, and say (as many are saying now) is not the Lord amongſt us? No evil can come upon us: Therefore shall Zion for your sakes be plowed as a Field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the Forest,* verſe 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.

And as the Lord was angry with that Generation for those Evils that abounded amongst them, even so is he angry with this Nation, because Iniquity and Transgression abounds, and love to Righteousness, Equity and Justice (and to them that live therein) waxeth cold in many, who make a Profession of God, and Godliness. But behold! the Lord hath looked down from Heaven, and hath beheld the Iniquities of many to be of a Scarlet and Crimson dye, and hath also beheld the great Oppression of his People, and the groanings of the Oppressed hath entered into his Ears; And the Lord God is arisen in his mighty Power to plead the Cause of the afflicted, and will call all to an Account, who are guilty, both for their Sins against him, and also for their Oppressing of his innocent People, and will render a Recompence of Reward into every ones bosom, according to their doings.

Therefore a *Warning* is in my heart to you all, whose day of Mercy is
not

not yet ended; Forlake your evil Courses, break off from your Sins by true Repentance, and fear before the dreadful God of Heaven and Earth, before whose Bar of divine Justice, you must all stand, and receive a Sentence from him the true and equal Judge. And cease from oppressing and persecuting the People of the Lord, who seek nothing more than the Honour and Glory of his great Name.

And set up Judgment and Justice in the Earth, and encourage Truth and Righteousness, and take the Rod of the Wicked from off the back of the Righteous, which hath lain heavy upon them long; and punish *Wickedness* and *Debauchery*, *Swearing* and *Cursing*, *Drunkenness* and *Whoredom*; all which abound to the grief and sorrow of many. You may hear it every day in your Ears, and behold it with your Eyes, not only many in Authority (who should have been better Examples) but also the very Boys and Children in the streets, their Mouths are full of *Cursing* and *Damning*, which is dreadfull to think of: its grown so common, and so much encouraged by the bad Examples of many of those that should have been a terror to evil doers.

Therefore punish these *Wickednesses*, which run down like a flood, and endeavour to stop the current of Iniquity, which at this day increases in a dreadful manner; And be good Examples your selves, in Holiness of Life and Conversation; *Or else God will pour out Shame and everlasting Contempt upon you, and will plead with you in his fierce Wrath, and in his sore Displeasure; and his Indignation will break forth like devouring Fire, and ye shall be (who are guilty of those Evils) like Hay and Stubble before him, who will consume you both Root and Branch, if you repent not, and that speedily.*

And, Oh that you would fear before the living God, and dread his holy Name, and seek the Lord while he may be found: Call upon him while he is near, lest that day come upon you, wherein you may seek him and he will not be found of you, because you have rejected his Reproofs, and would have none of his Counsel.

Therefore, if a day yet remain to you, mind the Honour of God, and the good of your own Souls; and the propagating of Truth and Holiness more than your own Interest, Friendship, or Favour of Men, or your Pride, Pomp and vain Glory, which God will stain and blast by the breath of his Mouth, and will blow it away with the whirlwind of his Wrath, like the Chaff of the Summer threshing-floor for ever.

But that you may have a Habitation in the Kingdom of Eternal Glory, which God hath prepared as a dwelling place for the Righteous, is the desire of my Soul.

Who am a lover of Truth and Righteousness, W. B.

An Expostulation with the Clergy, and a warning to those among them, whose day of Mercy is not over, &c.

AND now, all you *Priests*, who have taken upon you to be the Leaders and Guiders of the People, and also to take the Care and Oversight of them, and to instruct them, and to be their Shepherds, and to feed them (as you pretend) with Spiritual Food.

The Controverſie of the great God of Heaven and Earth is with you, and the day wherein he will plead with you in his ſore diſpleaſure, make haſte upon you, becauſe you have neither fed the People with the Food you pretended, nor taken ſuch care of their Souls, as to have led and guided them in the way of *Truth* and *Righteouſneſs*, as you ought to have done. For have you not made the People to err by your *Lies* and by your *Lighthearts*? For according to what ye have taken upon you, ye ſhould have been good *Examples* to all, in *Holineſs*, in purity of *Life* and *Converſation*. You have been *Examples* to the People, I grant; but in what? Hath it not been (with many of you) in *Pride*, *Lighthearts*, *Prophaneneſs*, *Covetouſneſs*, *Oppreſſion* and *Debauchery*, as *Drunkenneſs*, *Curſing*, *Swearing* and *Whoredoms*, with many great and crying *Sins*? Do not theſe *Abominations* abound amongſt many of you (upheld and encouraged by your bad *Examples*) of the *Clergy* of *England*, and the *Dominions* thereunto belonging? I leave to all ſober People, that obſerve your *Lives* and *Converſations* to judge.

And ſo inſtead of leading People in the way of the Lord (which is a *perpetual* way for ever) and into *Righteouſneſs* and *Holineſs* (without which none can ſee the Lord) have you not been *instrumental* (in the hand of the Enemy of all *Righteouſneſs*) to lead them into the *liberty* and *loſſneſs* of the World, and into *darkneſs* and *ignorance* of the Lord, and of his *Holy Spirit* and *Grace* (which was the *Teacher* and *Leader* of the *Saints* of old) by your *ungodly* and *unrighteous Lives*? Do not your *Practiſes* beſpeak you to be *blind Guides*, leading the *Blind* (though it's wilful *Blindneſs*) and ſo have fallen together into the Ditch of *Uncleanneſs* (which the aboundance of *Wickedneſs*, that at this day increaſes among many of you and your hearers alſo, do plainly ſhew) and are ready to fall into the Pit of *eternal Miſery* and *Lake of Perdition* (if you repent not) which will be your portion at the hand of the *juſt God*, who will render a recompence of reward unto all, according to their doings.

And are you not (with many of your Hearers) in the ſteps of thoſe the Prophets of the Lord cryed out againſt? ſaying, *A wonderful*

a horrible thing is committed in the Land, the Prophets thereof prophecy falsely, and the Priests bear rule by their Means, and my People love to have it so, And what will you do in the end thereof? Jer. 5. 30, 31.

Again, Another Prophet cryeth out in these words, Thus saith the Lord God, Woe unto the false Prophets that follow their own Spirit, and have seen nothing. Oh Israel! thy Prophets are like the Foxes in the Desert, &c. They have seen Vanity and lying Divination, saying, The Lord saith, and the Lord hath not sent them; and they have made others to hope that they would confirm the Word: Have you not seen a vain Vision? And have you not spoken a Lying Divination? Whereas you say, The Lord saith it; Albeit I have not spoken: Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Because you have spoken Vanity and seen Lies; therefore behold I am against you, saith the Lord God, and my Hand shall be upon the Prophets that see Vanity and divine Lies: They shall not be in the Assembly of my People, neither shall they be written in the writing of the House of Israel, neither shall they enter into the Land of Israel; and ye shall know that I am the Lord God, because, even because they have seduced my People, saying, Peace, and there was no Peace: And one built up a Wall, and lo, others dashed it with untempered Mortar, Ezek. 13. 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.

Again, The Lord cryed out by his Prophet, saying, Son of Man, prophecy against the Prophets of Israel; prophecy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God unto the Shepherds, Woe be to the Shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves; Should not the Shepherds feed the Flock? Ye, eat the Fat, and ye cloath you with the Wool; ye kill them that are fed, but ye feed not the Flock: The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick; neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have you brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them, &c. Therefore, O ye Shepherds, hear the Word of the Lord; thus saith the Lord God, Behold I am against the Shepherds, and will require the Flock at their Hands, Ezek. 34. 2, 3, 4, 9, 10.

Again, The Lord cryeth out on this wise by another of his Prophets; For from the least of them, even unto the greatest of them, every one is given to Covetousness; and I from the Prophet, even unto the Priest, everyone dealeth falsely: They have healed also the hurt of the Daughter of my People slightly, saying, Peace, Peace, when there is no Peace. Were they ashamed when they had committed Abomination? Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush; therefore they shall fall among them that fall; at the time that I shall visit them, they shall be cast down, saith the Lord, Jer. 6. 13, 14, 15.

And Again, Another of the Prophets of the Lord cryed out on this wise; Thus saith the Lord concerning the Prophets, that make my People err, that bite with their Teeth, and cry Peace; and he that putteth not into their Mouths, they even prepare war against him: Therefore Night shall be upon you, that you shall not have a Vision, and it shall be dark over you, that you shall not Divine;
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and the Sun shall go down over the Prophets, and the day shall be dark over them; then shall the Seers be ashamed, and the Diviners confounded: The Heads thereof judge for Reward, and the Priests thereof Teach for Hire, and Prophets thereof Divine for Money, Mich. 3. 5, 6, 7, 11.

And are not you, the Clergy of England, and the Dominions thereunto belonging, highly guilty of most if not all these great Evils and Abominations which the false Prophets of old were guilty of, for which the true Prophets cryed out against them? For have you not run when the Lord never sent you? Though most of you have not run very far, it hath but been to augment your Wages, and to get latter Benefices: So we find that filthy Lucre has been your greatest inducement in your Runnings; for it hath been for that many of you have run from one place to another, and have taken upon you to speak in the Name of the Lord, though he never gave you Commission so to do; and therefore you have not profited the People at all: For notwithstanding all your Preaching to the People, how does Iniquity abound, and Transgression encrease amongst them? Don't you hear with your Ears the horrible Crys, Oaths, and dreadful Cursings and Damnings, which make the Land mourn? Don't you see with your Eyes the Prophaneſs, Drunkenneſs, Looseness, and almost all manner of Wickedneſs and Debauchery which encreaseth amongst many of your Hearers? And are not many of you your selves (who should be Examples of better things) living and taking pleasure therein? Yea, I am sure many who live near the Fountains, from whence you spring, and where you learn your Arts and Sciences, have too much cause to affirm it to your shame, who daily hear and see to their great grief and sorrow of Heart, that almost all manner of Ungodlineſs, Debauchery and Uncleanness abounds amongst many of you in these places; and not only in these places, but also in many other places where you come; Let but People observe your Lives and Conversations, and see whether many of you, who pretend to be Leaders and Teachers of others, (but let all People consider whither such can lead them; it's but into the broad way, the end whereof is eternal Misery: Therefore let all People leave off following those Leaders, who are such bad Examples to their Followers) are not highly guilty of the before-mentioned Abominations; and so are not Examples of Righteousneſs and Purity, but of Wickedneſs and Prophaneſs to your Hearers; for which the Anger of the Lord God of Heaven and Earth is kindled, and nigh to break forth upon you like a devouring Fire; and if you Repent not speedily, will consume you Root and Branch.

And are you not bearing rule by your Means, and endeavouring to make the People love to have it so? and by force and Cruelty, oppressing and persecuting those, who cannot for Conscience sake own you to be the true Ministers of Christ, nor put into your Mouths, like those the true Prophets of the Lord cryed out against? Read Isa. 56. 10, 11, 12.

And are you not seeking your Gain from your Quarters, and minding the

the Fleece more than the Flock? And don't you preach for Hire, and divine for money? yea; are you not selling both your Sermons and Prayers for Money? and so are doing contrary to the command of Christ to his Ministers and Messengers, when he sent them forth (as Lambs among Wolves) to preach the Gospel of glad Tydings to the People, who said, *freely you have received, freely give.* Let your doings testify against you, that you are not in the steps of the Disciples of Christ, but are in the steps of *Simon Magus*, or worse than he) who would have bought the Gift of God for money: but you sell your own divinations (under a pretence of the Gift of God) for money: and if his practice was condemnable, how can yours be justifiable? So that which was said to him by the holy Apostle *Peter*, may justly be said to you; *you have neither part nor lot in this matter; for your hearts are not right in the sight of God, and you are seen to be in the Gall of Bitterness, and Bond of quity.* Neither do we yet find or understand that you have yet repented of your wickedness, (so much as he did of his) for instead of repenting, are you not going on and endeavouring to obtain your covetous ends, and are giving flattering Titles to many, and having mens persons in admiration for your own advantage and self-ends, and are crying peace to many, in such a state and condition as the Lord never spoke peace to any in? And so are manifest to be like those that cry *peace, peace, when sudden destruction and misery is at hand.* And you have fed your selves with the Fat, and clothed your selves with the Wool, and have preyed upon the People; and by your oppression and cruelty have scattered the Flock instead of gathering them, or turning them to God, who is become the Shepherd and Teacher of his People himself, according to his Promise of Old, *That he would gather his Sheep from the mouths of those Shepherds that made a prey upon them:* Which Promise many have witnessed to be fulfilled in this our day, blessed be his Name for ever.

And are you not biting with your Teeth, (like the false Prophets of Old) and crying *Peace* to them that put into your Mouths. (though never so Unchristian-like in their Conversations) But they that cannot for Conscience sake put into your Mouths, to maintain your Pride, High-mindedness and Oppression, have you not, and yet are *preparing War against them?* Let the great spoil and havock you have made of many sober and conscientious Peoples Goods bear witness against you: And the many Prisons in England and elsewhere, in which you have imprisoned some unto Death, and many others to the ruining of them and their Families, because they could not for Conscience sake pay you your unjust and unchristian Demands, as Tythes, and many other things, which never were demanded nor paid in the primitive Christian-Times, as Gospel-maintenance (neither is there any ground in the Scriptures for them to be demanded) by the Ministers of the Gospel; and seeing they were neither demanded nor paid by the Apostles or their Successors, while they kept in the primitive Purity; nor any Prescription given forth by the Apostles, that they (to wit Tythes) should ever be paid or received by the Christians in future Ages: And also, seeing they were denied, and testified against by several of the first Reformed Protestants, as *Walter, Brute, &c.* Therefore for you to demand them, and to cast men into Prison for the Non-payment of them, manifests you to be such as the holy Apostle cried out against; *Who beguile unstable Souls; an heart they have exercised with covetous Practices, cursed children which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray following the way of Balaam, the Son of Bofor, who loved the Wages of Unrighteousness,* 2 Pet. 2. 14, 15.

And these your Cruelties, Persecutions and Oppressions testify to your faces (and to all People that are willing to see you) that you are out of the steps, Life and Spirit of the Messengers and Ministers of Christ Jesus; neither have you any Example for these your Wicked Practices and ungodly Lives, neither from the Priest under the Law, nor from the true Ministers of Christ and Preachers of the holy Gospel in the Primitive Times, and in several Ages since the Apostles daies, but from *Balaams* false Prophets, false Teachers, &c. such as the Prophets of the Lord testified against.

And all these your Practices of Oppression, Cruelty and Persecution, and your unholy Lives and Conversations are sufficient Evidence and Ground for us (had we no more) not to believe that you are the Ministers and Messengers of Christ, but of Antichrist; for we don't read that ever the true Ministers of Christ did oppress or persecute others, or leave any President for any such Practice, but the contrary; for it was many times their Lots to be persecuted, shamefully abused, and cast into Prison by others, both in the Primitive Times, and in the Reformation, and almost in every

Age until this very day : And so the words of the Apostle have been and yet are fulfilled (to wit) *Tea, and all that will live Godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution*, 2 Tim. 3. 12. And it was Portion that Christ our Lord said, that such who lived in and followed him should meet withal, *That they should be hated of all Nations for his Names sake : And that they should hate them that hate them, and persecute them, and kill them.* He did not say, *The Believers should cast their Enemies into Prison and persecute them ; but commanded, To love their Enemies, and to pray for them that despitefully used them, and persecuted them, that they might be the Children of their Father in Heaven, who sends the Rain on the just and unjust, &c.* But you have been so far from obeying Christ's Command, to love your Enemies, that you have, and yet are doing despite to those that never did you any harm, but have sought, and yet are seeking your Everlasting Peace and Well-being, both of Soul and Body. So that Persecution and Cruelty is not a Mark of true Believers, that obey Christ, neither of his Messengers, and Ministers, whom he sends forth to preach the Everlasting Gospel, but a Mark of the *Whore, false Prophets and Antichrist*. Notwithstanding all their fair Pretences for Christ, yet they have been persecuting the Saints, and drinking the Blood of the Martyrs and Servants of Christ, *For which the Anger of the Lord is breaking forth, and he is waiting in his mighty power to plead the Cause of his suffering People ; and will give the Whore her Cup to drink, and the Cup of his Indignation and Fury, (which she shall not escape) from his hand, so be her Portion, and the Portion of all that join with her, except they repent.*

And that you are in the same steps, your own Practices, in persecuting and oppressing an innocent People, are evidence and proof sufficient against you. And therefore all you whose Day of Mercy is not yet over, and are guilty of these things, Repent of, and cease from these your wicked and Unchristian-like Practices of Cruelty, and Oppression, Persecution, and also from your wicked, clean Lives and Conversations, and humble your selves under the mighty hand of God, submit to, and lie under his righteous Judgments, and bare his Indignation and Wrath, which just upon you for your wickedness, cruelty, and oppression, and for your Pride and ungodliness, which abound among many of you ; that thereby you may learn righteousness, and to dread and fear before the face of God, and to serve him in truth and righteousness, who over all is worthy to be served, honoured and obeyed for ever.

And mind the teachings of his holy Grace and Spirit (a measure whereof is given to every man profit withal) which teacheth to deny Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and to live a sober, a righteous and a godly Life in this present evil World.

And be ye Examples of Meekness, and lowliness of mind and spirit, and of purity, righteousness and holiness in your Conversations, or else the dreadful God of Heaven and Earth will pour out his Fury like fire upon you, and ye shall be as Hay and as Stubble before his fiery Indignation, which shall burn you up, and ye shall be able to quench it, and your portion shall be with the Beast and false Prophets, who shall be taken and cast into the Lake of Fire that burns (as with Brimstone) to be tormented for ever and for ever more.

Moreover, God Almighty, whose righteous Soul has been grieved by your cruelty and oppression against his People, and whose holy Name has been and yet is dishonoured by your Ungodly Lives, will pour out shame, and everlasting contempt upon you, and ye shall be like Chaff before the Breathing of the Almighty, who will drive you away like Smoke before the Wind, never to be found any more ; and your Names shall rot in the Earth, and your Sins shall come up. And as the remembrance of the Wicked and false Prophets are an evil favour to this day, so shall the remembrance of you be to the Generations that are yet to come if ye repent not speedily.

But that you may all escape these Judgment of the Lord, and eternal sorrows (which are prepared as a Portion for the Wicked) in returning to the Lord by true repentance and amendment of your Lives ; and that you may find mercy with God to your immortal Souls, both in this World and in that which is to come, is the desire of him who is concerned to give forth this Testimony as a Warning to all whose day is not yet over.

Who am a Hater of Deceit and Hypocrisy, but a Lover of Truth and Righteousness, and a Well-wisher of the Souls of all the Sons and Daughters of Men.

William Bingley.

THE END.